

**Family Policy Council Minutes
January 24, 2008**

Members Present: Andrea Archer, Employment Security Department; Jody Becker-Green, Department of Social and Health Services; Kari Burrell, Office of the Governor; Representative Mary Lou Dickerson; Patrick Dowd, Office of Public Defense; Martin Mueller, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Marijo Olson, Department of Community Trade and Economic Development; Riley Peters, Department of Health; Lyn Shanafelt, Department of Early Learning.

Members Absent: Senator Jim Hargrove; Senator Val Stevens.

Guests: Kathy Adams; Annie Blackledge; Denese Bohanna; Claudia Eilers; Sharon Estee; Krista Goldstine-Cole; Julie Grevstad; Bill Hall; Judy Hall; Lisa Jacobsen; Bob Jones; Liz Kohlenberg Dario Longhi; Geof Morgan; Linda Nelson; Laura Porter, Family Policy Council Staff Director; Kathy Ramsay; Irina Sharkova; Sasha Silveanu; Fred Yancey.

Welcome and Introductions

Marijo Olson, Family Policy Council Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. Ms. Olson had provided a few extra minutes for networking and welcomed everyone, appreciating attendance during this busy legislative session. Council members introduced themselves. Andrea Archer, new representative of Employment Security Department, was introduced.

Approval of Minutes

The Council reviewed the September 24, 2007 meeting minutes.

Motion

Kari Burrell moved and Martin Mueller seconded, to approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Update on OSPI Work to Prevent Dropping Out of School

Ms. Olson invited Annie Blackledge, Program Supervisor of Building Bridges, to begin her brief presentation.

Ms. Blackledge explained that last year House Bill 1573 established state goals of increasing the number of students expected to graduate on time and increasing the number of student retrievals among youth who had dropped out. Two main components were authorized: a state-level work group and a grant program.

The state-level workgroup held its first meeting at the end of November. As outlined in legislation, the workgroup reviewed information about barriers that prevent the coordination of program resources across agencies and discussed the need to develop and track state level performance measures and bench marks. In the future the workgroup will identify research-based and emerging best practices regarding prevention, intervention, and retrieval programs. 45 interested individuals attended the first workgroup meeting. From the discussion at the first meeting, a Workgroup Charter was drafted which will be approved by a smaller but representative Steering Committee. Ms Blackledge provided information about the structure of committees and subcommittees of the Building Bridges Workgroup, and thanked the Family Policy Council for their participation.

Ms. Blackledge discussed the grant program, which requires partnerships, a needs analysis and work with prevention, intervention, and retrieval programs. The grant period is between January 2008 and June 2009. On January 22nd the grants were reviewed and awarded. 15 grants were funded across a broad geographical representation. Grant amounts are between \$125,000 and \$175,000. Target populations to be identified and receive priority for services in the Building Bridges Grant Program are foster care, juvenile justice, special education, dropouts, and any additional target population.

Representative Dickerson thanked Ms. Blackledge and inquired to how they are putting in place measures of effectiveness and outcome measures for these grants?

Ms. Blackledge stated that grantees are setting their own goals and working with a contracted evaluator from Washington State University to set common goals.

Representative Dickerson inquired if there will be true outcome measures of effectiveness rather than number of people served.

Ms. Blackledge responded that outcomes will include attendance, grades, WASL, student specific and wider goals related to measurable reeducation.

Mr. Mueller clarified that the legislation included an extensive list of outcome measures that will be used regarding dropout and truancy.

**Whatcom County Service Integration/ Update on Partnerships and Review
(RCW 70.190.110)**

Kathy Ramsay; Area Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services
Geof Morgan; Executive Director, Whatcom Child and Family Network
Kathy Adams; Whatcom Child and Family Network

Geof Morgan, Executive Director of the Whatcom Child and Family Network, Kathy Ramsay, Area Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services, and Kathy Adams, staff to the Network introduced themselves.

Mr. Morgan provided an overview of the Network and an update about where we are as a partnership. Network has been focused on community engagement for last 10 years. Community engagement has been the primary strategy for reducing the rates of problem behaviors. Network staff has worked directly with residents in four to five Bellingham neighborhoods and five areas in rural Whatcom County to build community capacity to solve challenging problems, create healthy norms, and provide family support within the neighborhood. We have combined county wide programs with neighborhood efforts as it was useful to the communities. Partnerships have developed over time. Now, our efforts with residents and our partnerships with service providers, the faith community, and the private sector blend together really

well. It has been important to have the Family Policy Council for leadership and to increase confidence that our work has a policy audience – that we are really operating at three levels at once: neighborhood, county, and state. Thank you.

The Whatcom County Network partnership with Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) started 2003 with the DSHS service integration project.

Ms. Ramsay has been the DCFS Area Manager in Bellingham for three years. She explained that Geof Morgan was the first person who came to her in her new position as Area Manager in Whatcom County to say we need to work together. He proposed service integration that would improve child safety outcomes and improve the effectiveness of family support. When Mr. Morgan arrived to say “hi lets partner” it was a surprise and a whirlwind. It is exciting to have the Network as such a great partner. Because of the neighborhood engagement work and the service integration work in Whatcom County in past years, the entire community gets behind what we are trying to do.

Ms. Ramsay explained that Family to Family started 20 months ago in Whatcom, the program includes family engagement and resources for kids going into foster care, self evaluation, teen meeting, and safety for kids. The goal we see is to have kids stay with their families as long as they are safe. If this is not possible, we want to keep the kids local, with family support networks and do what we can to get children back home and create strong and healthy families.

We meet monthly to brainstorm. The group gets bigger ever month. We just met with three different people on Tuesday – it’s incredible. For a long time DCFS was so closed. We need the community - we can’t do this alone. In Bellingham, we are focusing on the Roosevelt and Birchwood neighborhoods where there are high referral rates for our office. We brought in three community residents who are working with families through a time-banking program, identifying strengths and sharing them with the community. This has been slow coming around but we are making headway.

Through Streets & Trips we are able to map where children are from and where they are going to, which allows us to learn more about neighborhoods with high needs. We selected the neighborhoods for our initial venture into partnership based on the highest need. We plan to extend our work to a third neighborhood within the year. Ms. Ramsay explained that DCFS and the Network are determined to localize efforts and develop supports for families. Some of the strategies we are using include a Parent Mentoring program developed so foster parents can teach birth parents and a Parent Partner program that matches someone who has gone through system to mentor others going through the process.

Ms Ramsay thanked the members for letting DCFS and the Network share.

Mr. Morgan: DCFS brings to the neighborhood a huge partnership. The data is compelling – neighbors are stepping up to help. We now know how many children have moved out of the neighborhood because there was no foster home for them within. The data makes it clear how the neighborhood can help. On National Night Out, we hosted an event where 75 residents heard a presentation from Kathy Ramsay that included data, and then started a conversation about what they could do to help children and families. We needed the data map to start the conversation. The network can identify community people who are key people in the neighborhood and Ms. Ramsay can provide them with compensation to do portions of necessary work. Foster Parent recruitment became a goal of everyone involved. A neighborhood resident who had previously received leadership training and coaching through the Network was hired to recruit foster homes. That strategy is working. The partnership allows us to be flexible and stay focused on the best actions for helping the families and children.

Ms. Ramsay explained that she and Geof Morgan meet regularly to generate solutions for emerging challenges. We may start with one idea, and an hour later we have 20 more possible solutions.

Mr. Morgan added: its working!

Kathy Adams, staff to the Network, co-chairs the Family to Family Safe Child team with DCFS staff. She explained that their next step is to move the team work from a DSHS facility to the community center in the neighborhood where the family lives to do family meeting for DCFS families. The community is implementing/trying evidence based practices, but sometimes the fit between the practice and the family needs and strengths isn't right, or the programs are service eligibility driven, and not outcome based. We are considering decategorization because it will provide us with flexibility to do what works to deliver better outcomes.

Mr. Morgan mentions that outcome goals are measured along the way. We give ourselves six months to see progress. Our Partnerships' long-term goals are for no child to be placed out of the home. If they must be, our secondary goal is that no child is placed outside of the neighborhood. During a family crisis, the neighborhood intervenes and prevents the need for DCFS involvement. We need to build these supports. We are asking ourselves: What kinds of things would lead to this? How we might want to replicate it?

We are preparing to bring a decategorization recommendation to you. We are doing a lot locally and we are committed to using you, the leaders in our state, in a good way. For instance, for service integration, we need to align our intake forms and align information. Opportunities for integration are at Community Centers that are starting to form in three different neighborhoods. We want to keep the lines of communication open about service integration so people can understand the benefits of holistic support rather than service for families with many different needs coming from separate agencies. Having funding flexibility for integration authorized by state policy makers will be an important benefit to our families. One reason to consider decategorization is that contracting with child placement agencies is done regionally, not in our area. This is very challenging for Ms. Ramsay. Other child placement agencies are not held accountable to our local approach. I think we could do better if we were managing those resources as a part of our overall partnership in Whatcom County. We will be asking for your support to make that change.

We are planning for an initiative for a decategorization pilot of Family Preservation Services, so that we can address what the child needs, which may not be specific to pre-determined programs. We need both local support and the support of state leaders.

We believe when the communities are strong, children and families are safer. Engagement means joining the community in a journey of self discovery, of recreation, a journey of self actualization.

Ms. Burrell: I know Family to Family is piloting and testing throughout state. Is Bellingham the only place Children's Administration is partnering with a Network?

Ms. Ramsay: I don't know. We weren't a pilot, but it has been helpful to have a Network.

Ms. Burrell: Whatcom Network is so committed to community engagement and Family-to-Family is about this. It's a nice fit here. Is this happening with other Networks?

Mr. Morgan: Snohomish is looking to partner and we are encouraging them.

Ms. Porter: South King County Network is also working with DCFS Family-to-Family.

Ms. Bohanna: We are beginning to partner and there is vast potential.

Ms. Burrell: The Children's Administration contracts at a regional level. What about the foster care recruitment process?

Ms. Ramsay: Right now the contract goes to an agency outside of Whatcom County. We want to bring foster care recruitment to a local level. People know people at a local level and can recruit families. A goal is to hire someone locally whose sole job is to recruit foster families in Whatcom.

Mr. Morgan: How can we help? We don't recruit foster families but we do ask how we can help. The Network function changes based on what needs to be done to make all the family support efforts work better.

Ms. Ramsay: Working with the Network, there's never a "no". We bring strengths in partnership. Ideas lead to solutions. For example, we talked about having a foster home in the City of Everson. Through the Network we found that there is an abandoned house in Birchwood that might work. We are thinking "let's buy it". That's the kind of creativity we are looking at.

Representative Dickerson: It is exciting how you are breaking down barriers. How are kids lives better now that you are doing this work, or how do you intend to answer that?

Ms. Ramsay: Safe child meetings are keeping kids from entering the system. We asking families what they need and helping kids. We want to keep kids in the neighborhood and we have to develop those resources. There are 136 foster homes in Whatcom, but a lot of those homes have kids from other parts of the state. We prefer to keep kids local. Neighbors take care of each other, whenever possible, rather than calling us. There are lots of families that we don't need to be involved with if families help each other out. We will be able to see the out of home placement rate change on the data maps we are producing.

Mr. Morgan added: A woman wanted to do a reading summer program got 18 children in her front yard, reading to them once a week, providing snacks, she became a resources to those families. Those children completed a school reading program, received a certificate, and for the first time 5 of 18 got their own book. She developed an arts and crafts program during holidays at the resource program. Families know her and trust her because of this past work. Now she is the one who has been hired by DCFS. The relationship has developed so that families turn to her as a resource rather than being fearful of a representative of DCFS.

Ms. Becker-Green: Thank you for traveling. The message is very strong. This type of community engagement is important and critical, and doesn't yet exist in all parts of our state.

Mr. Morgan: Different communities are different. If a Network is not the partner, they may know who would be. A Network can help look for that partnership. It's the Network's responsibility to search for somebody who is excited. We don't have to be the partner, but we have the kinds of relationships throughout the community to look for who is.

Ms. Olsen: Thank you, this is inspiring. It's wonderful to see what committed people can accomplish.

Skagit County Application to Re-Activate their Community Network

Lisa Jacobson, Prevention Center ESD189, and Linda Nelson, Prevention Center and Skagit County Child and Family Consortium co-chair introduced a proposal to re-activate the Skagit County Community Public Health and Safety Network, which lost state funding in 2001.

Ms. Nelson asked the Council to find the proposal complete and to forward the request to the Governor and Legislature. She explained that leaders in Skagit County plan to enhance an existing collaborative (Skagit County Child and Family Consortium, or SCCFC) in order to fulfill the requirements of Community Network membership and operations. Currently the SCCFC has about 40 members..

Ms. Nelson talked about identifying gaps in service in mental health services in Skagit County. Based on our work, the County Commissioners adopted the county option sales tax increase to establish Mental Health professionals in every school. Our next goals include establishing outcome goals for the child and family serving system as a whole.

Member Departure

6:35 pm Representative Dickerson departed.

Ms. Nelson stated that we have a six-prong plan to address gangs and bring community together. Our second annual violence prevention conference is in March with Dr. Jorge Partida out of Chicago.

Ms. Olsen restated the Skagit County community request that the Family Policy Council forward the proposal to re-activate the Network to the Governor and Legislature, explaining that she did understand that re-activation is contingent upon receiving additional funds to support the Network in the supplemental budget.

Ms. Burrell asked Laura if her or her staff had looked at the application and if they believe it to be complete? Ms. Porter answered yes; the application is included behind the briefing paper. It is very complete. The organization is operating already and a good fit to perform as a network. For re-activating, this Network has a strong foundation.

Motion

Chairperson Olsen inquires if there is a motion on the Council to accept the application as complete and forward the local request to the governor and legislature for consideration?

Discussion/Questions:

Ms. Becker-Green questioned how the four tribal communities in the county are engaged?

Ms. Nelson answered that the tribes are members of SCCFC. They are also partnered on specific activities. The Swinomish Tribe is applying for a Department of Justice grant for domestic violence. The SCCFC put them in contact with other organizations in the county working in those areas as a means for strengthening their grant application. She added that the SCCFC is working with the Upper Skagit Tribe and the Samish Tribe to provide training for our consortium members. We are working with the Tribes directly through communities, school districts, and individuals.

Mr. Peters moved and Ms. Becker-Green seconded, that the Council will adapt as complete and forward the application to the governor and legislature for consideration.

The motion passed unanimously

Severity and Capacity – Geographic Patterns, State Partnership, and Policy

Liz Kohlenberg, Director, DSHS Division of Research and Data Analysis
Family Policy Council Staff and Council Discussion to Inform Next Steps

Ms. Olsen introduced the severity and capacity charts (see meeting materials).

Ms. Porter explained the purpose of the mapping project is to pursue the question - does the state need to be a different kind of partner with places with many severe problems and limited capacity to solve those problems?

Ms. Kohlenberg introduced her staff, Irena Sharkova and Sharon Estee. Ms. Kohlenberg explained that Ms. Porter came to her in December to ask if RDA could put together information about the pileups of severe problems in communities. Ms. Kohlenberg worked with Dario Longhi, Family Policy Council Research Director, to select indicators of problems that seemed to be a good fit with the Family Policy Council purpose and tried to ask three questions:

1. Which communities have high rates of which problems?
2. Which communities are getting pileups of more than one problem or are experiencing very severe rates as compared to the state average?
3. What is the geographic distribution of problems and rates?

The database for this project was built from the original database that provided information for Family Policy Council and Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention.

Ms. Kohlenberg explained her methodology. Data was used that could provide measurements within counties to get measurements as small as possible to show clusters. Locales, which are school districts or groups of school districts, were used, until a base population of 20,000 people was made. Several locales cross county lines. Most notable were Skagit, Whatcom, Snohomish, and the far eastern part of Washington. We questioned if this would make sense and according to school districts personal it does. A five year average was used.

Mr. Mueller asked Ms. Kohlenberg for clarification about the indicator used as proxy for dropping out of school.

Ms. Kohlenberg explained that the population of the senior class is divided by the population of the freshman class. If the senior class is 80% of the size of the freshman, either the school district is growing fast or students are dropping out. There are about 50% differences between classes in some of these districts – this is true nationally. Nationally the difference is about 40% between freshman and senior classes.

Pileup and patterns:

A table is provided for each locale. We have indicated where communities are one or two deviations higher than state. We add up the scores. Some communities have high concentrations of problems. For example: Yakama has a high loss of freshman, high weapons incidents in school, high client rates, high teen mother, but not substance abuse, not child injury, not high on injury to women – overall score is 10. This is the highest score.

Ms. Olsen stated that we need more time to study this. Can we ask you to come back again?

Ms. Porter explained that the packet has a lot of information and the intention is to provide information that will help members to start thinking about community variation in the severity of problems. She

added that in past meetings she talked about our staff theory – communities with high levels of severity and low capacity may need the state to be a different kind of partner. Communities that have many kinds of severe problems may be getting swamped and it could be hard to self-organize and create solutions. In order to pursue this theory, trends over time data is needed to assess severity, plus we need a working definition of capacity. As a starting point looking at trends over time, staff has prepared a set of charts for your consideration. Staff gathered trend data for 14 indicators available at county level but not available at locale level.

Ms. Porter explained each Chart in the handouts provided to the Council.

Chart 1 shows the single year score. Chart 2 shows the levels over time. Many counties who start high still remain high. Chart 3 indicates the difference between counties – which ones have problem pile-ups that are getting better, which ones are staying the same, and which ones are getting worse. The remainder of the charts shows the degree of correlation between problem pile-ups and various demographic facts.

Mr. Mueller inquired about the relationship between indicators of severity and community capacity. Are we looking at incidents of problems based on community ability to collect the data, programs available?

Ms. Kohlenberg replied that I don't think it's an artifact of the data. We do some interpellation but not major estimation. Poverty is not necessarily an indicator of pileup. We expected income to be more related to severity than it is. How come some places with the same kind of risk don't have the same outcome?

Mr. Peters appreciated the great work and stated that he will contact Laura about specific indicator data concerns that he had. He stated that the Family Policy Council may want to invest in gathering data that would provide a more direct picture about various risk factors, such as social capital and leadership, which can be measured. Through adult surveys you can ask questions which might provide a more sensitive measure. He added that income disparity might also be something to look at.

Mr. Mueller pointed out that the drop out data patterns may indicate student population mobility. In Pasco there is a 100% turnover a year because of migrant workers.

Ms. Olsen commented on broad range of data collected on a state wide basis. I am thinking, do I know of a place that does not have much capacity but actually did improve, for example Clallam County. Can we collect anecdotal examples and research what made the difference?

Ms. Olsen said that this is the start of the conversation, not end of the conversation. We need to have more discussion in-between and during our next meeting. We have a long ways to go.

Mr. Peters found this to be an intriguing policy question. Do those communities with lower levels of resources and professionals that may be overwhelmed require a different relationship with the Council?

Legislative Update

Supplemental Request to Move Funds from Year One to Year Two

Ms. Porter explained that with 601 provisions kicking in, all moneys budgeted for the Family Policy Council is restricted to be used in a single year. In the past we were provided flexibility to expend funds over the biennium. Many Networks spend more money in second year, using the first year of the biennium to develop their approach. We ask that more money move from the first year to the second year as a technical adjustment to the Governor's Budget. Members concurred.

Legislation to add representation from the Department of Early Learning and Office of Public Defense to the Family Policy Council

Two representatives were added as honorary members, with the note that the Family Policy Council is requesting a change to RCW 70.190 membership to formally add representation from these organizations in Council membership.

Staff Director Report

Update – Expansion of Pierce County Juvenile Court Block Grant with Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration

Whatcom and Walla Walla have been selected for the expansion of the Pierce County Juvenile court decategorization pilot project.

Mental Health Transformation Project; Prevention Subcommittee Report and Recommendations The Mental Health Transformation Grant white paper is out. Ms. Porter represents the Family Policy Council on the Advisory Committee.

Ms. Porter suggested that, in the interest of time, written reports would suffice for the rest of today's briefings.

Announcements

None

Public Comment

Ms. Goldstine-Cole announced the dates for the 2008 Family Policy Council Summit. The Summit will be held November 12th – 14th at the Great Wolf Lodge in Chehalis which is co-owned by the Chehalis Tribe and Great Wolf.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:30 pm